Freedom Watch

Citizens Project

This is a PAID INSERT

THIS MONTH

- Connecting campaign-fundraising reform and civil rights pg 2
- CU domestic-partner benefits pg 4
- CP adds Program Manager pg 2

INSIDE CP

Meet our new Executive Director

p 3

Citizens Project

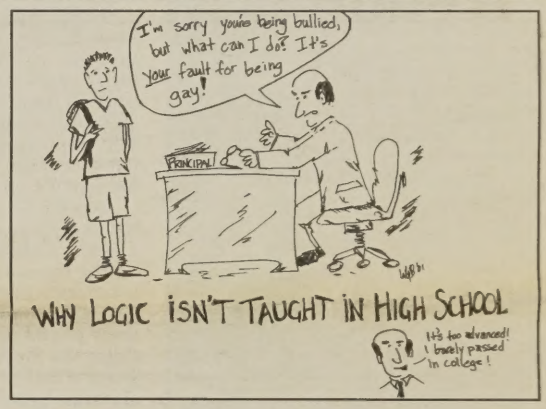
Gay-student harassment:

National report and local perspective

by Jennifer Malenky

A recent report compiled by the Human Rights Watch, "Hatred in the Hallways", documents the struggles of gay, lesbian, and transgender youth against bullying and harassment in U.S. schools. The study argues that the daily incidents of verbal and even physical abuse suffered by these students constitute human-rights violations. Gay youth are often the victims of hateful verbal abuse at the hands of their peers and suffer further indignity when teachers and counselors fail to stop the abuse. The study examines the effects of "hatred in the hallways" through interviews with 140 youths and 130 teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and youth-service providers in seven states. Topics include gender and homophobia, coping with harassment and violence, the despair that often leads tormented youth to resort to self-destructive behavior and even suicide, the "official inaction" of teachers and administrators, the benefits of gay-straight stu-

See **National Report** page 3


I'm sorry you're being bullied, but what can I do? It's your fault for being gay.
PRINCIPAL
WHY LOGIC ISN'T TAUGHT IN HIGH SCHOOL
It's too advanced! I barely passed in college!

Educational diversity survives appeal

by Ken Burrows

A successful appeal by the University of Colorado at Boulder regarding what academic majors would be acceptable for students seeking to earn teacher certification appears to have prevented what critics were saying would have been a chilling impact on teacher diversity in Colorado K-12 classrooms.

A months-long controversy had erupted when the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) voted in May to approve only 11 of 55 academic fields in which elementary-education students could major at CU-Boulder. But in June, when the University appealed that decision by CCHE, the result was that CCHE approved a total of 44 majors instead of just the original 11.

There was considerable debate about the reasons for CCHE's original disallowance of so many majors, whether the Commission was acting within its authority, and the ultimate impact that such a broad disallowance would have had on diversity of teachers and quality of education in the state's schools.

The issue evolved as a result of CCHE being charged under a 1999 law, SB-154, with recertifying Colorado's 15 schools of education. That law passed with the support of education schools, their faculties, school superintendents, K-12 teachers, and the Colorado Education Association (state teachers union) and was aimed at streamlining the teacher certification process in Colorado to more quickly alleviate a statewide teacher shortage. The law stipulated that schools of education in the state revamp their programs so that students could complete their liberal arts courses and their education courses within a four-year period. (Previously, teacher candidates would earn their bachelor's degree first, then add a year of education classes, meaning the total academic course-work would require five years.)

Majors initially disallowed by CCHE attract the largest percentage of ethnic minorities in the school of education.

As part of the recertification process, CCHE contracted in April of 2000 with the National Association of Scholars (NAS), a conservative think-tank, to evaluate teacher-training programs at four Colorado education schools: CU-Boulder, University of Northern Colorado, Mesa State, and Metro State. This $25,000 contract, and particularly the findings of NAS with regard to the CU-Boulder education school, are what brought the debate about stifling diversity to a head.

The NAS concluded that teacher education programs at CU-Boulder engaged in "proselytizing for progressive causes" like multicultural education, promotion of diversity, and gender and racial equality. The NAS report actually recommended that the teacher program in Boulder be terminated. That did not happen, but on May 2, partly in response to the NAS findings, CCHE voted to approve only 11 of 55 academic fields in which elementary education students could major at CU-Boulder.

Among the majors initially dis-

See **Teaching** page 2

Citizens Project
P.O. Box 2085
Colorado Springs, CO 80901

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Colo. Spgs., CO
Permit No. 463

Announcements:

CP co-sponsors seminar on campaign-fundraising reform & civil rights

Stephanie Wilson, director of the Fannie Lou Hamer Project will speak at the project's seminar, Monday, September 17, 6:30 - 9:00 PM, at the Shorter Community African Methodist Episcopal Church (3100 Richard Allen Court, Denver, Colorado). Other speakers will include representatives from the NAACP, the Colorado State Legislature, and Colorado Common Cause.

The Fannie Lou Hamer Project aims to create a national grassroots movement to redefine campaign finance as a civil rights issue. The Project connects the history of earlier voting and civil rights struggles to the ongoing struggle for human rights, and works to create an intergenerational movement that promotes the inclusion of young people as leaders in that effort. The Project serves as a vehicle for traditional civil rights organizations and communities of color to engage in campaign finance reform initiatives.

Sponsored by: the National Civic League; Citizens Project, Colorado Common Cause; Colorado Progressive Coalition; Denver NAACP; the Colorado Interfaith Alliance; Colorado Black Women for Political Action; National Council of Negro Women, Inc.- Denver Section; the Center for African-American Policy; and the Denver League of Woman Voters. Contact Citizens Project for details.

Local Film Festival

The Lavender Film Festival is September 14, 15, and 16 at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. The festival features a unique program of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender films from every continent. Festival producers feel they have chosen the best films available, which all film lovers will find enlightening and entertaining. Purchase festival passes at Wag-n-Wash, the Hide and Seek Main Bar, KRCC, or Spice of Life. Visit the festival web site at www.lavenderfilms.org or call (719) 38-MOVIE for film listings and individual ticket information.

Series on civility

"The Struggle for America's Soul: A National Faith or Religious Diversity?", a summit event with the Reverend Dr. Welton Gaddy, national executive director of The Interfaith Alliance, will take place at 7:30 PM, Tuesday, September 11, at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. The event is sponsored by The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado. Visit their website: www.interfaithalliance.org/Activism/state/co.html, or call (720) 524-1100 for more on the series.

Teaching

from page 1

allowed by CCHE were American studies, astronomy, chemistry, fine arts, geology, music, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, classics, religious studies, women's studies, environmental studies, ethnic studies, Asian studies, and all foreign languages. (Some majors were disallowed because they require five years to complete, instead of the statutory four.) Of the 225 students enrolled in the CU-Boulder program, 90 are currently majoring in one of the disallowed fields. If they were at sophomore year or beyond, they still would have been able to pursue certification in their chosen major. But CU wouldn't have been able to admit elementary education students in the eliminated majors in the future.

CCHE was accused of overstepping its authority and effectively stifling diversity in future elementary and high school classrooms by what critics said was CCHE's overly narrow approach to determining what academic majors are permissible for students seeking teacher certification in Colorado's schools of education.

Jeanne M. Adkins, director of policy and planning for CCHE, said judgments on allowable majors are made on the basis of making sure future teachers will be able to impart a specific set of skills and knowledge to their pupils and help them pass the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests. As an example, she was quoted in a May 2001 *Denver Post* article as saying: "Is the teacher with a Russian degree going to be able to help the third-grader pass the CSAP? We're talking about being fair to kids in the classroom."

Critics saw a different picture, though, and a different set of motives. Phil DiStefano, vice chancellor for academic affairs at CU-Boulder, said state regulators look for a combination of general education courses in math, science, English, civics, and history, and such courses are covered in the core curriculum at Boulder. Then elementary-education students pick a strong substantive major, he said. DiStefano said using a one-size-fits-all approach to majors is not the best way to go and would have discouraged students from enrolling in education because they would not be able to obtain what they believe is a substantive degree in the liberal arts.

CCHE was accused of overstepping its authority and effectively stifling diversity in future elementary and high school classrooms by what critics said was CCHE's overly narrow approach.

Critics also pointed to the fact that the majors initially disallowed by CCHE attract the largest percentage of ethnic minorities in the school of education. William B. Stanley, the dean of the school of education in Boulder, said African-American and Hispanic students, for instance, are drawn to majors in psychology, sociology, and ethnic studies. He said eliminating such majors would stanch the flow of minority educators in a region of the country where they are desperately needed. Stanley resigned his position on June 30 this year, citing as one reason his conclusion that CCHE is "hostile to our position on diversity, democracy and social justice."

A CU-Boulder Department of Sociology committee, in a letter to the editor of Silver & Gold Record last month, said it was "ludicrous" that teachers would be prohibited from majoring in sociology, which has been closely associated with education through the years. Their letter also stated: "Sociology examines problems of diversity more directly and more persistently than any other academic discipline. Partly for this reason, women, people of color ... and many others who experience discrimination are attracted to sociology. [Therefore,] denying prospective teachers a chance to major in sociology may well reduce the social diversity of the teaching profession," which they said is vital to attaining the goal of equal educational opportunity.

CU regent Bob Sievers voiced similar criticism, saying the rejection of 44 majors was politically motivated and would have been a detriment to diversity in Colorado. "It's anti-CU-Boulder, anti-women, and anti-minority," Sievers said. He called it "appalling" that Spanish was disallowed as a major in a state with a rapidly increasing number of Hispanic students. CU's DiStefano said that, although he didn't necessarily think the CCHE decisions were an intentional attack on diversity, the Commission does not understand that many of the disallowed majors meet state standards and core requirements for elementary teachers. "Teaching jobs are opening up where there is a large population of minority students," he said. "The teaching force is still not a minority population, so we want our students to understand how to meet the needs of diverse students."

CP staff growing

Citizens Project added a third staff position, Project Manager, this summer to a two-person staff. LeAnn Baca-Bartlett joined Citizens Project this June.

Previous to her position at CP, LeAnn worked for Colorado College at the Center for Community Service, advising students' local volunteer work and providing volunteer-management tips. Before that, she worked with area youth at two local treatment facilities, one for children and the other for teenage girls. LeAnn graduated from Smith College in 1997, with a major in Religion and Biblical Literature, and a minor in Film Studies. She received her high school diploma from Coronado High School and attended elementary school and junior high also in District 11.

Through the mission of Citizens Project, she is pleased to support values of relatives seven generations before her in Colorado, having relatives serving in both the Colorado State Legislature and the Colorado Territorial Legislature.

Her responsibilities as Project Manager will be overseeing the day-to-day operations of the office, volunteer management, and special events and projects such as Freedom Watch and the upcoming School Board Candidate Forums.

LeAnn Baca-Bartlett

Quote of Note

I have spent more than 40 years of my life fighting against discrimination. We have come too far in this country to go back now. It is not the right thing to do; it is not the right way to go.

~Representative John Lewis,
D-Georgia, legendary civil rights activist, after the House of Representatives approved federal funding of charitable religious groups.

Citizens Project

CP welcomes Greg Borom as Executive Director

A word from Board Chair, Richard Conway

On behalf of Citizens Project's Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that Greg Borom has accepted the position of Executive Director of the organization effective September 1, 2001. Currently CP's Assistant Director, Greg will become Citizens Project's first Executive Director when Megan Day, CP's Director for the last six years, leaves at the end of this month to pursue other opportunities.

Greg Borom

Greg will bring nearly ten years of social-justice experience to the executive director's position. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies from Emory University in 1992, Greg served as an intern for the General Board of Global Ministries from 1992 to 1995. During this time, he spent 15 months working for the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence (PCSN) in East Jerusalem, where he helped coordinate meetings between Palestinians, Israelis, and other internationals interested in furthering the prospects for Palestinian-Israeli peace and co-existence.

After leaving PCSN, Greg spent 15 months interning at Moore Community House in Biloxi, Mississippi where he implemented tutoring, recreation, and enrichment programs for low-income children. During this time, he also administered a statewide political network designed to unite Mississippi churches and synagogues to end child poverty through progressive public policy. In 1995, Greg was hired by Moore Community House to continue his successful work. For the next four years, he helped Mississippi residents identify specific community needs and lobbied for increased city spending on local childcare, community health, and affordable housing programs.

In 1999, Greg was hired as Assistant Director of Citizens Project. Since that time, he has been involved in nearly all of the organization's administrative tasks and programming initiatives, including CP's financial management, fund raising, volunteer management, and media relations, as well as CP's Candidates and Issues Forums, Activist Network, and other special programs and events. In 1999, Greg helped create CP's Civic Leadership Taskforce, a program that identifies qualified individuals to serve on city- and county-appointed boards and commissions. Greg also developed the Student Organizing Program, which creates opportunities for high school students to work with Citizens Project on programs that support the organization's mission.

Greg was selected for this position after a nationwide executive-director search. During his interviews, Greg spoke passionately about his life-long commitment to pluralism, freedom of religion, and the separation of church and state; discussed his successful history with Citizens Project; and outlined his strategy to help CP achieve its full potential. Again, I know I speak on behalf of the entire board when I say that, out of the dozens of candidates who applied for the position, Greg possessed the best combination of skills and experience that are important to the success of Citizens Project, and that his leadership and vision will help all of us create a more inclusive, supportive, and rewarding community for Pikes Peak area residents.

National report

from page 1

dent alliances and efforts to suppress such groups, and a comprehensive look at legal standards and precedents that are used both to justify and to refute such discriminatory behavior. (The report may be viewed online at www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslbgt)

Locally, Inside Out Youth Services offers a safe haven for gay youth in a supportive, accepting environment. Inside Out has been around for the past 10 years; it was formed as a program of the El Paso County McMaster Center, which deals with drug and alcohol abuse. Therapists there saw the need for a support group for gay youth since many were clients. In 1996 Inside Ou incorporated as a private non profit. Citizens Project spoke with Inside Out director Tasha Hill about issues raised in the report that are happening in our community.

CP: What are the attitudes toward gay students in Colorado Springs public schools?

TH: Their experiences run the gamut, from kids who have no problems with bullying in school, to those who have had to drop out because of it. In schools where kids have been bullied on a daily basis, administrators don't support them because they say it's the student's own fault for being gay, and that's why they are harassed. Even when parents get involved, administrators have encouraged the student to leave school. Gay students have just dropped out of school, others have gotten their GED, and some are home-schooled. We have mostly high-school kids and some from junior high.

I had one student come to me who counted how many times a day she was called "faggot" directly or heard the word being used around her and the average was 36-50 times per day.

CP: Are the anti-bullying policies or practices in effect right now effective enough in condemning this harassment? How have they been applied?

TH: The state legislature passed an initiative recently that all school districts must have an anti-bullying policy in place by the beginning of this school year. Most schools have a "zero tolerance" policy in place, but differences in administration from school to school, and tolerance of homophobia mean that it's enforced differently. There is no specific directive around sexual orientation. It's hard to know how the policy has been applied. What I hear from the youth who come to me is that they don't know about the policy. It hasn't been made clear to them or their parents. Policies I know of don't address what bullying is, but only what the consequences are. We have spoken with District 11 about such a plan. (Note: District 11 is currently formulating their anti-bullying policy and no copy was available at this time).

CP: The National Education Association (NEA) recently weighed a resolution calling for new school programs that create a "safe and inclusive environment" for gay and lesbian students. Focus on the Family was a vocal critic of the effort for promoting a "homosexual agenda". Who do you think should teach students about homosexuality?

TH: It's a shared responsibility between parents and educators. Since schools are public institutions, taxpayers should have a say in what educators teach. In all subjects, from biology to history to anthropology to literature, there are omissions in the contributions gay individuals have made. In biology class, it is totally appropriate to teach that sexuality covers a broad spectrum and there are different ways sexuality is expressed. This has been true in every culture throughout history. It's not that we advocate special programs, but rather that there are gaps in the truth and an agenda to keep homosexuality stigmatized. Curriculum should include the relevance of homosexuality so that straight students learn that it is not deviant or wrong, and to validate gay students so they are included in the subjects they learn in school.

CP: Some conservative groups have argued that current policies or laws already protect gay people from discrimination and there is no need for "special treatment" for gays. Do these policies go far enough?

TH: What has been true for any oppressed group throughout history is that you oppress through omission; by not referring to them and pretending they don't exist or have different needs. If there weren't discrimination happening against gay people, the worst that a more defined policy could do is to be irrelevant. But the fact is that we hear reports of discrimination and harassment in the schools everyday and this continues to happen.

CP: Gay students sometimes have to fight to form clubs that meet on school grounds. What is the situation with gay-straight alliances in Colorado Springs?

TH: There were three gay-straight alliances (GSAs) formed in the spring semester at local schools. They were all kept quiet and there was no publicity about them. It was hard even for us to find out about them. Youth activities have to be sponsored both by a student and a faculty member and that makes it difficult. They tend to ebb and flow and we're not sure if they'll be starting up again in the fall. They are still very secretive about meeting. Some school districts, such as in Utah, tried to ban GSAs from school grounds but the result was that all clubs had to be banned. A lot of the GSAs are just struggling to survive. This is the only forum where they can talk about issues among themselves and with straight allies.

CP: What can we do now to improve the climate for gay youth in schools?

TH: There should be more training for students and educators, along with a clearly defined policy of what constitutes harassment. There should be efforts that send the message to potential bullies that this behavior will not be tolerated. This includes homophobic remarks directed at any kids. All school districts need to adopt a policy that includes sexual orientation. GSAs should be supported like any other student club. In an ideal world, gay and lesbian issues would be inserted into school curricula to educate students about differences.

Citizens Project

Newsbriefs

Ultra-conservative legal society influential in Bush administration

People for the American Way Foundation, a national organization committed to defending democracy and bringing the ideals of community, opportunity, diversity, equality, and fairness together, released a report on the Federalist Society and its influence in the Bush Administration. Their report, "The Federalist Society: From Obscurity to Power," describes the history and personalities of the ultra-conservative legal society. Federalist Society members within the Bush Administration include Attorney General John Ashcroft, Department of the Interior Secretary Gale Norton, and Department of Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham.

Law professors Robert Bork (failed Supreme Court nominee) and Antonin Scalia (current Supreme Court Justice) provided initial support for the Federalist Society, which was founded by students in 1982 at the law schools of Yale University and the University of Chicago. The report outlines the far-right opinions of the society's leadership and public figures, while raising concerns about the influence the society is exerting on Bush's appointments for lower court positions and, if the opportunity arises, Supreme Court nominees. You can read and download the report from the People for the American Way website, www.pfaw.org. The Federalist Society website is www.fed-soc.org.

> ***"This is a great step toward creating equality in the Colorado University system as in other university systems around the country."***
>
> *-Greg Borom*

Bush's faith-based initiative loses leader

John DiIulio, Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, stepped down from his position August 17th. The resignation concerns advocates for church-state separation since his replacement will likely be a conservative Republican. The fact that DiIulio, a life-long Democrat and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, was appointed by President Bush surprised some. His appointment was seen as a move to gather bipartisan support. He is credited with gaining support of Democrats, inner-city faith organizations, and other organizations generally not in support of Republican efforts.

DiIulio intended to re-evaluate the position after six months when he first accepted the job. He cites health and personal reasons for leaving the position. Some religious leaders speculate that he was forced out by pressure from right-wing conservative members of the president's cabinet.

The House of Representatives has approved a bill that extends funding through 10 programs to religious groups. Legislation has not yet been introduced in the Senate, which reconvenes after Labor Day. Senator Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn, is working on his own legislation as well as the president.

CU considers domestic-partner benefits

The CU Board of Regents was expected to vote on the inclusion of domestic-partner health care benefits, August 2. The proposal was pulled from the agenda by its author, Bob Sievers, to modify the proposal.

The committee will consider changes to their proposal that will make the process easier for domestic partners to obtain benefits. The previous proposal would have required three forms of financial interdependence (such as joint bank account, credit card, or house ownership). The same proof is not required of married couples applying for insurance.

Regents will also consider accepting and/or requiring partners to register with domestic-partner registries existing in Boulder and Denver counties, since any Colorado state resident can register.

Citizens Project spoke in support of the inclusion of domestic-partner benefits and the changes to the proposal at the August 1st committee hearing. "This is a great step toward creating equality in the Colorado University system as in other university systems around the country," said Greg Borom, CP's new Executive Director, in the Denver Post, August 2nd. The Board of Regents is expected to vote on a revised proposal September 6th.

Social Justice from Africa to the Springs

Join CP Advisory Council member June Waller, Tutmose Academy's Baba Abi Afonja, and author Matt Meyer for a public discussion on justice and nonviolence in Africa and our local community. Thursday, September 27, 7:30 PM at the Smokebrush Theater. The event will include a book signing of *Guns and Gandhi in Africa*, by co-author Meyer. Sponsored by Citizens Project, Colorado Springs NAACP, and Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission.

You can make a difference
JOIN CITIZENS PROJECT

Your voice for tolerance in the Pikes Peak region.

Citizens Project ...

- Reports on news and views in *Freedom Watch*
- Organizes campaigns, workshops, and events
- Sponsors candidate surveys and forums
- Monitors and informs on legislative and other issues

... and more

❑ Yes, I'd like to join Citizens Project! Enclosed is my membership contribution of $25 or more.

❑ I'm already a member, but I'm ready to do more! Enclosed is my contribution of:

❑ $25 ❑ $50 ❑ $75 ❑ $120 ❑ Other: $_____

(All members receive a postage-paid subscription to Freedom Watch.*)*

❑ Sign me up for the Activist Network email: _____

Name _____

Address _____ (Street)

_____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)

Phone (____) _____ (Work) (____) _____ (Home)

Please return to:
Citizens Project
Box 2085
Colo. Spgs., CO 80901

Our Mission: Citizens Project is a grassroots organization in the Pikes Peak region dedicated to upholding the traditional American values of pluralism, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state.

Citizens Project
P.O. Box 2085
Colorado Springs,
Colorado 80901
Phone: (719) 520-9899
Fax: (719) 520-0118
www.citizensproject.org
email:
info@citizensproject.org

Board Members

Richard Conway, Chair
Kimberly Sherwood, Vice Chair
Dorelle Raab-Peters, Treasurer
Deborah Adams
Sharon Berthrong
Lynda Dickson
Margi Duncombe
Sharon Friedman
Rev. Robert Hewitt
Mary Ellen McNally
Mike Miles
Cat Scheibner
Richard Van Scotter

Advisory Council

Dr. Peg Bacon
Christine Beserra
Buck Blessing
Amy Divine
Carolyn & Peet Heuberger
Dr. Carolyn Jefferson Jenkins
Mary Mashburn
Rep. Marcy Morrison
Jerome Page
Katherine Pease
Joanne Peterson
Colonel David Porter
Dr. James Sauls
Dr. Jim Alice Scott
Howard Sheldon
Councilman Richard Skorman
Marvin Strait
Rev. Gerald & Rose Trigg
Doug Triggs
June Waller
Greg Walta
Marjory Webster

Editorial Committee

Richard Conway
Christine Burns
Ken Burrows
Sharon Friedman
Jennifer Malenky
Mike Miles
Richard Van Scotter

Staff

Greg Borom, Executive Director
LeAnn Baca-Bartlett, Project Manager

Thanks to 3ri Copy-editing for copy-editing this issue of Freedom Watch.

An affiliate of Community Shares.
***Freedom Watch* is a monthly publication of Citizens Project.**
©2001, Citizens Project. All rights reserved.

Freedom Watch appreciates the support of:

Gay & Lesbian Fund FOR COLORADO